
Commercial Swordfish Permits and Gear

To sell swordfish, you need a directed, incidental, or handgear swordfish limited access permit. These permits are administered under a limited access program and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) is no longer issuing new swordfish permits. To obtain a permit, it must be transferred, within the upgrading restrictions, from someone who is leaving the fishery. Contact the Southeast Regional Office for information on renewing or transferring permits (727-824-5236). *Swordfish directed and incidental permits are only valid if held in conjunction with both a shark and tuna longline permit.*

Retention Limits

North Atlantic Swordfish (north of 5° N lat)

Directed - no trip limit (when the directed fishery closes, you may retain 15 swordfish per pelagic longline trip, two swordfish per handgear trip, and no swordfish per harpoon trip)

Incidental - 2 swordfish per trip or no more than 5 if fishing with squid trawl

South Atlantic Swordfish (south of 5° N lat)

Directed - no trip limit (when the directed fishery closes, no swordfish may be retained)

Incidental - no retention allowed

Authorized Gear

Longlines and handgear (handline, rod and reel, harpoon, bandit gear). Squid trawlers may land swordfish, subject to incidental catch limits noted above.

Commercial Swordfish Quotas

U.S. domestic quotas for swordfish are negotiated at the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT). For the 2005 fishing year, the base landings quotas are:

North Atlantic Swordfish Quota (north of 5° N lat)

Directed: 2,937.6 metric tons (mt) dressed weight (dw) (divided into semiannual quotas of 1,468.8 mt dw).

Incidental: 300 mt dw ; *Reserve*: adjusted annually

Dead Discard Allowance: 0 mt dw

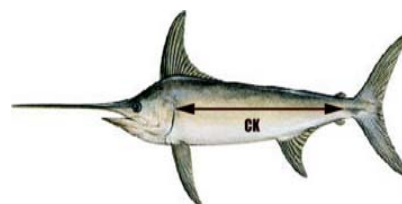
South Atlantic Swordfish Quota: (south of 5° N lat) 75.2 mt dw. The quotas are adjusted annually based on over- and under-harvests, dead discards in excess of the allowance, and changes in the amount allocated to the United States at ICCAT. Up to 150.4 mt dw of swordfish caught in the Atlantic Ocean between 5° North and 5° South may be applied to the North Atlantic swordfish quota.

Minimum Size & Weight Limit

Whole Fish - 47" lower jaw fork length (LJFL)



Head or Tail Removed - 29" cleithrum to caudal keel (CK)



Minimum Dressed Weight - 33 lb

These size and weight limits apply to U.S. citizens and U.S.-flagged vessels throughout the U.S. EEZ and the high seas. Fish must be kept in whole or dressed form through landing. "Dressed" indicates a headed/gutted fish with some or all fins removed. You cannot cut the fish into smaller pieces on board the vessel.

Pelagic Longline Gear Restrictions

- 1) There are several closed areas. See the HMS Compliance Guide, HMS webpage, or 50 CFR part 635 for more details and locations of area closures.
- 2) To help reduce sea turtle mortality, the length of any gangion must be 10% longer than the length of any floatline if the total length of any gangion plus the length of any floatline is less than 100 meters.
- 3) A variety of sea turtle handling and release gears are required which are fully described in the document entitled "NMFS Approved Models For Equipment Needed For the Careful Release of Sea Turtles Caught in Hook and Line Fisheries." More information on releasing sea turtles is available in "Careful Release Protocols for the Sea Turtle Release with Minimal Injury." Both documents are available on the HMS Management Division website.
- 4) A plastic placard entitled "Sea Turtle Handling/Release Guidelines," is required to be posted in the wheelhouse.
- 5) Live bait use is prohibited in the Gulf of Mexico.
- 6) All swordfish vessels with pelagic longline gear on board must have a vessel monitoring system installed and operating when the vessel leaves port.
- 7) Specific hook sizes, types, and bait must be used, depending on area. See the HMS Compliance Guide, HMS webpage, or 50 CFR part 635 for more details

Reporting Requirements

If selected by NMFS to complete logbook reports, you must complete a logbook within 48 hours of each day's fishing activities for multi-day trips, or before offloading for one-day trips, and submit the logbook within 7 days of offloading. If selected by NMFS to carry an observer aboard your vessel, you must inform NMFS when you will be taking a trip and if an observer is assigned, you must have a NMFS observer on board in order to go fishing. If selected by NMFS to complete the cost-earnings section of the logbook, you must complete and submit that section of the logbook within 30 days of offloading. This economic data section must be

completed in addition to the other logbook reporting requirements.

Dealers and Importers

Anyone who buys or imports swordfish must have a dealer permit. Dealers must report to NMFS all swordfish purchased from U.S. vessels through biweekly reports. Each swordfish import shipment must be accompanied by a Swordfish Certificate of Eligibility (COE). In late 2004, NMFS issued a rule that provides that, effective July 1, 2005, an ICCAT Swordfish Statistical Document (SSD) will be required (add? "in lieu of the COE" here?). Both the COE and SSD attest either that the swordfish was harvested from an ocean area other than the Atlantic Ocean or that the fish part was derived from a swordfish, harvested from the Atlantic Ocean, that weighed at least 33 lb (15kg) dw. To obtain a swordfish dealer permit, please call the Southeast Regional Permit Office at (727) 824-5326. For information on the COE or SSD, call Susan Linn at (228) 769-8964. As of July 1, 2005, importers will be required to have an HMS International Trade Permit.

General Information

The HMS Division fax network provides updates on management actions. If your organization would like to be a member of our fax network, contact Carol Douglas at 301-713-2347.

HMS Management Division Webpage

www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms

NMFS Permit Webpage

www.nmfspermits.com

1-888-872-8862 (HMS Permits)

1-800-894-5528 (Info Line)

Tuna Issues

HMS Gloucester 978-281-9260

Shark Swordfish and Permitting Issues

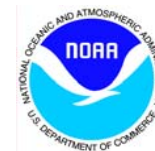
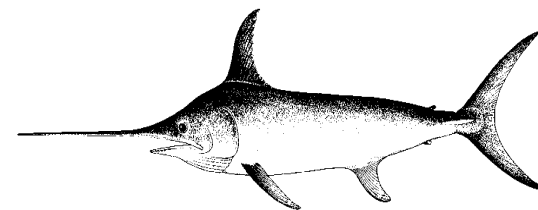
HMS Headquarters 301-713-2347

Recreational Swordfish & Billfish Issues

HMS St. Petersburg 727-824-5399

National Marine Fisheries Service
HMS Management Division
1315 East-West Highway
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Atlantic Swordfish Commercial Fishery Regulations



National Marine Fisheries Service

Office of Sustainable Fisheries
Highly Migratory Species Management Division

This pamphlet provides a summary of commercial swordfish regulations, as of February 2005. For the complete and official set of regulations, see 50 CFR part 635 and the Federal Register. A copy of complete recreational swordfish regulations may be obtained by calling the Highly Migratory Species Management Division. Since fishery rules are subject to change, fishermen must familiarize themselves with the latest complete regulations and are responsible for complying with current official regulations. If there is a discrepancy between the regulations in 50 CFR part 635 and this pamphlet, the official regulations take precedence. This brochure is produced in compliance with Section 212 of the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act.

